

William Gallacher 1920-1978



This Memorial Exhibition has been arranged by the Glasgow Art Club as a spontaneous tribute and mark of esteem to a colleague and friend. We appreciate the immediate response of the Glasgow School of Art to co-operate and assist in every possible way.

It is always a great sadness to loose a friend but to loose Bill Gallacher as a friend and colleague, as an artist and as an Art Club member is a loss which can never be replaced. Bill was one who was easy to like and as a long-standing and greatly respected member of the Art Club for nearly thirty years, his company was continually sought by Artist and lay member alike. His was a gentle and modest personality, full of humour. He was a friend to all and many were enriched beyond their immediate realisation and rewarded often beyond their expectation.

There can be, and indeed there usually is, gratitude beyond all the sadness, gratitude for what Bill left behind in the memory of each one of us who knew him, gratitude too, for the work he left for us to enjoy as we do now in this exhibition. To all of us who are priviledged to see them, these pictures must bring back fond memories both of the man and of his work and so it is with confidence that the Art Club commend the show to you in the knowledge that it is a unique opportunity to see so much of Bill's work together at one time.

Bill is survived by his wife Nita, an artist in her own right and by two sons, Michael and James and their daughter Jane, and to them, the Art Club offers its friendship as well as its thanks and appreciation to Nita for her help in making this exhibition possible.

Stuart H. Paterson
President, Glasgow Art Club

THE GLASGOW ART CLUB

9 – 30 NOVEMBER 1979

William Gallacher

1920-1978

MEMORIAL EXHIBITION

I have a fond and indelible memory of Bill Gallacher cleaning his pipe. It was a ritual carried out with the maximum concentration. Head bent, eyes narrowed, each twist of his knife round the bowl had the precision of long practice and as he worked he would punctuate his movements with carefully measured words, pawky or earthy as the subject matter dictated. He pretended ignorance but made his points shrewdly and questioned innocently to destroy the pretentious.

I met him for the first time when he returned to Glasgow School of Art in 1946 to resume his interrupted studies. I learned that shortly after 'Baby Gallacher', as his Birth Certificate describes him, was born on 11th November 1920, at Brooklyn Hospital, New York, his parents decided to return to Scotland. They set up house in Paisley where, in due course, the young Gallacher went to Camphill School.

It was not long before his abilities with pencil and brush were recognised, encouraged and rewarded. Outwith school both Paisley and Kelvingrove Art Gallery held drawing competitions which he entered, carrying off certificates and medals as evidence of his talent.

When he left school it was to Glasgow and the Art School that he made his way but before he could complete his course the Second World War broke out. Characteristically he renounced the easy option of American Citizenship to volunteer for the Royal Navy and the attendant hardships of life on a minesweeper. The seven service medals of which he was justly proud, speak more of monotonous discomfort and proximity to danger and death than ever he did.

He resumed his course which was successfully completed in 1947 when he was awarded a Diploma of Art in Drawing and Painting and the Guthrie Book Prize for the best portrait study. Why he then switched from Drawing and Painting to Mural Decoration as it was then called, I do not know and can only surmise that there was an untapped design element in his work which he wished to explore.

Certainly it was during this session that he painted his large mural 'Salome' on one wall of the students' refectory. Restrained in colour but rich in design it was a work which combined strength and elegance.

He became a Post Diplomat of the School in 1948 and shared the Brough Prize presented for the best Artist/Architect solution to an interior design project.

His drawing ability was especially admired by the Architecture Department and his services as visiting lecturer were soon in great demand. From then until 1978 when he was appointed to the full-time staff of the School he combined teaching and painting as a way of life.

He kept a remorselessly clinical eye for his self portraits but when it came to depicting the young and beautiful he allowed the romantic deep inside him free expression.

He exhibited in the Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts of which he was a member and was awarded a portrait prize; his work appeared regularly on the walls of the Glasgow Art Club where they also merited an award.

When illness first struck it was with surprise that I learned of it for he had always seemed impervious to seasonal ailments. When he returned, although he looked thinner and a little paler, his dogged determination was still in evidence. There was little change in his output and, shrugging off sympathy, he worked on.

To take things more easily was not in his nature and he died, I have no doubt, as he would have wished, as he climbed towards his studio, on October 29th, 1978. Glasgow has always been rich in character and characters and Bill Gallacher fits easily into the tapestry of personalities which the City has produced. He left behind a large volume of work—drawings of students, drawings of young people, drawings of Garnethill's varied residents as well as numerous portraits. He also left behind kindly memories which will long survive.

John B Fleming

- 1 **Madeleine** 40 × 30 ins
Property of Mrs Sanders
- 2 **Douglas M Annan** 24 × 20 ins
Property of John Annan, Esq.
- 3 **Hamish C Annan** 24 × 20 ins
Property of John Annan, Esq.
- 4 **Study of Drapery** 48 × 48 ins
Property of Mrs Gallacher
- 5 **Michael with a Gun** 30 × 24 ins
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 6 **Hamish C Annan** 24 × 20 ins
Property of John Annan, Esq.
- 7 **Dr. J Martin Strang, CBE** 40 × 30 ins
Property of 1st Bearsden Company of the Boys' Brigade
- 8 **Patrick McCann, Esq. MBE, JP** 18 × 14 ins
Property of Patrick McCann, Esq.
- 9 **The late John Lawrence** 52 × 44 ins
Property of John Lawrence (Glasgow) Ltd.
- 10 **Peter Anderson, Esq.** 18 × 14 ins
Property of Peter Anderson, Esq.
- 11 **Jane** 14 × 10 ins
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 12 **Self Portrait** 36 × 28 ins
Property of John Ross, Esq.
- 13 **Baby Jane** 7½ × 7½ ins
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 14 **Elaine** 20 × 16 ins
Property of Ninian Sanderson, Esq.

- 15 **Self Portrait** *28½ × 23 ins*
- 16 **Beverly** *20 × 16 ins*
Property of Ninian Sanderson, Esq.
- 17 **Jane** *20 × 17 ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 18 **Lynn Moore** *19 × 14½ ins*
Property of George Cowan, Esq.
- 19 **Mona Lisa** *60 × 50 ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 20 **Jane** *31 × 31 ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 21 **A Marked Man** *58 × 45 ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher



- 22 **Margaret Anthony Park** 25 × 22 *ins*
Property of Joseph Park, Esq.
- 23 **Jane** 24 × 20 *ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 24 **Angry Man** 60 × 46 *ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 25 **Christine** 24 × 20 *ins*
Property of Dick McLaren, Esq.
- 26 **Portrait of a Young Girl** 20 × 16 *ins*
Property of Ninian Sanderson, Esq.
- 27 **Arranging a Still Life** 60 × 46 *ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 28 **Ronald Inglis** 24 × 20 *ins*
Property of Professor J. A. M. Inglis
- 29 **The Pause** 60 × 50 *ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 30 **Michael aged 2** 29 × 25 *ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 31 **Michael** 17 × 17 *ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 32 **Michael** 25 × 22 *ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 33 **James** 36 × 18 *ins*
Property of Mrs. Gallacher
- 34 **Mother and Child** 29 × 10½ *ins*
Property of John Ross, Esq.
- 35 **Wendy** 16 × 12 *ins*
Property of John Ross, Esq.

- 36 Jane** 32 x 24 ins
Property of Peter Gillies, Esq.
- 37 Paul Gillies** 24 x 20 ins
Property of Peter Gillies, Esq.
- 38 Jane Hurry** 30 x 20 ins
Property of Mrs. Hurry
- 39 George Beattie of Auchenbole** 40 x 32 ins
Property of George Beattie, Esq.
- 40 Landscape, Uplawmoor** 10 x 26½ ins
Property of Dr. J A Coia
- 41 Jane** 14 x 10 ins
Property of Mrs. Gallacher

Memorabilia

The Exhibition is supplemented by a selection of drawings, studies and photographs in the Bar area of the Club.

The President and Council of the Club are profoundly grateful to the Director and Governors of the Glasgow School of Art for their generous co-operation with the catalogue. In particular we are indebted to the Staff of the Graphics Department for its production.

